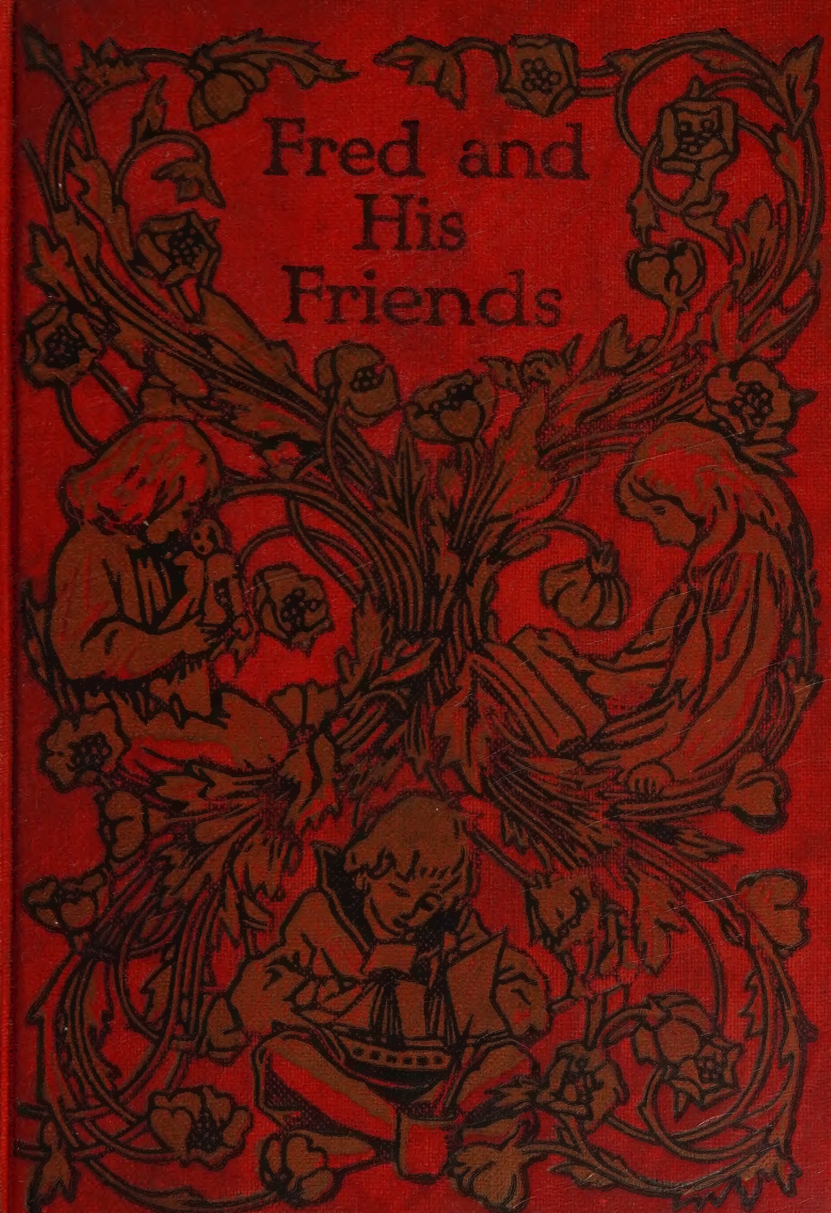
Fred and His Friends



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"Here is our own bunny come home to us."

FRED AND HIS FRIENDS,

And the Wisdom he Learned.

By

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FRED AND HIS FRIENDS.

I.

THE NURSERY WINDOW.

"I THINK our nursery window is the nicest place in the whole world."

It was fat little Fred who said so, perched on the broad window-seat in his night-shirt, with the pink soles of his small feet sticking out into the room. He was speaking to his sister Lucy, who lay quietly in her warm bed at one side of the window, just opposite Fred's bed, which was greatly tossed, for he had been making houses with the sheets and blankets for twenty minutes before he climbed up on the window-seat.

Lucy was looking at her new coloured picture-book, and made no reply; but nurse, who was tying the last string of baby's pinafore, preparatory to handing her to her sister Annie, called out in a severe tone, "Master Fred, you are a naughty boy for leaving your bed before I bid you. Come here, sir, this minute, and step into your bath."

Fred was a little afraid of nurse, so he clambered down with great alacrity, and ran across the room to the fire, before which the bath was placed.

How he shivered and shook as he put in one little foot and then the other!

"It's too cold—far too cold," he complained; but his murmurs were stopped short by nurse, who plunged him suddenly into the water.

"You put in no hot water this morning," he said, half crying.

"Indeed I did, sir—the full of the kettle; and there's baby didn't say a word."

"It's as cold as ice still. Do you think I'm a Polar bear, nurse?" asked he in an injured tone.

The idea of Fred being like the shaggy white bear in their picture-book set Lucy laughing.

The trials of his toilet over, Fred went back to the window, and amused himself with looking out until Lucy joined him.

I must tell you some of his reasons for thinking his nursery window the nicest place in the world. The nursery was the topmost room in a very tall old house; it seemed to be on a level with the tops of some fine fir trees that grew near it. There was a wood at a little distance from the window; but pretty close to it, standing out from the other trees, was one large fir tree, with a thick stem, covered with rough, red flakes of bark, and giant arms stretching out from it all round, from about half-way up the stem to the top,

which looked like a plume of blackish-green feathers.

It was very pleasant at the foot of the tree; for some long grass, which the children called "silk grass," grew over the roots, and formed cushions; and there were heaps of fir cones lying about, with which they built castles on sunny days when nurse permitted them to play under the trees, instead of taking a brisk walk with her.

It was delightful there on a warm spring day, when the rooks were building, and the herons, who take up house earlier than the rooks, were chattering on their nests, and many a blue egg-shell was to be found lying on the tufts of primrose leaves.

A foolish young pair of herons were building a nest on the tip-top branch; and Fred and Lucy watched them flying backwards and forwards with twigs of larch in their beaks—great, long twigs, as long as themselves—which swayed so funnily as they flew.

If they had not been so young they would not have done such a foolish thing as begin to build before winter was quite over; but they had only come out last spring, and their very own egg-shells were in Lucy's baby-house, laid up in a box lined with cotton.

Lucy and Fred sat on a window-seat and watched them every morning for a week. When the nest was ready, Mrs. Heron laid a lovely blue egg. All day long she sat upon it, although the weather was growing colder and colder; and next morning she laid another egg. That night a snow-storm came on, and when our children awoke they saw snow-flakes like a goose's breast feathers falling thickly past their window. Fred made no delay over his dressing, he was so anxious to watch them.

"Isn't it a pity of the herons? What will they do?" said he to Lucy, as he climbed up beside her.

"I don't know, indeed, Fred. They must

be very cold, and the eggs won't come out. There is the hen bird on the nest. See her long neck stretching over the edge. And there is the cock flying from the meadow. He has something in his mouth, and he is going to alight beside her."

"Yes, yes, Lucy; it is a frog—a great big frog. How its legs are twirling about.—Nurse, Mrs. Heron ate the frog at two bites, the way I ate your buttered toast when you were gone to fill your sugar-bowl. Do you hear me, nurse?"

"Hold your tongue, Master Fred; you'll waken the child."

"Don't shout so loud, Fred," admonished sensible, prudent Lucy. "Nurse is getting angry. Do listen; what a chattering the herons are making now. I wonder what they are saying. I wish I knew."

But poor Lucy never knew what they were saying. I, however, being a very wise person, can tell you, if you like to know.

"Here, my dear, take your breakfast; I'm sure you need it," began the cock heron.

"It's time for you to think of me, tied to this nest. You had your nice breakfast an hour ago, I suppose. Fish, very likely!"

"You are very ungrateful," replied the cock. "I could not find any fish, and I was a long time searching in the grass before I found a frog. I had a small one for myself—just half the size of yours. My legs are almost frozen with wading in that grass."

"And what is my back like, do you think, you selfish fellow? The snow is lying on it in heaps. I'm sure the young birds will not be worth all I am suffering to bring them out."

The cock made no answer; but he stood on a bough close to the nest, and brushed the snow off her back with his bill. When he had done this the snow-shower blew over, and the air got warmer. Both birds looked towards the nursery window, and saw Lucy and Fred.

"There are those children again. I wonder why they are always staring at us? What is that they are eating? It does not look like a frog."

Fred had a mug of milk in one hand and a warm white roll in the other. He had persuaded nurse for once to let him eat his breakfast on the window-seat instead of at the table opposite the fire.

"What are those nests of theirs made of?" proceeded Mrs. Heron. "Can they be made of snow? they look so soft and white. And what is that bright thing shining there?" She meant the fire. The herons could not see further into the nursery from their tree than the two white beds near the window, at least they could not see distinctly; and they perceived the red glow of nurse's fire without knowing what it was.

"I'll tell you more about it in one moment." So saying, the cock stretched out his long,

awkward legs, and spreading his wings, flew two or three times past the window, very slowly, and quite close to the glass, looking into the room each time. He was so accustomed to the children that he was not in the least bit afraid of them.

"See! see!" shouted they, laughing and clapping their hands. "I could touch him if the window were open," cried Fred.

"You'd not get leave to sit there if the window were open, I can tell you, sir," said nurse. "If you fell down there, you'd not be worth the picking up; there'd be no more bother with *you*."

"Listen, Lucy; they are chattering again."

The cock was on the bough beside the nest, and he was describing what he had seen.

"The bright thing is like the sky when the sun sets every evening, and nurse is sitting near it, holding out her hands before it; so I suppose it must be warm like the sun. That

was all I could see, for the children nearly filled up the window. I wonder if they will come out to play under the tree to-day."

But they were not allowed to play under the tree for many and many a day; not until the very end of March, when some mild weather came in, and all the herons far and near had brought out their young.

Our foolish herons had long since given up hopes of hatching those first eggs; and soon after the snow melted, Lucy spied them lying broken on the grass. Mrs. Heron had, however, laid some fresh ones, and there were now two downy birds in the nest with long bare legs and necks.

II.

DISOBEDIENT SILVERWING.

It was a charming day, and the nursery party, Sarah carrying baby, Lucy and Fred dressed in their warm crimson pelisses, and Annie, who thought herself a young lady because she was twelve years old and had her breakfast with papa and mamma, came out for a walk.

Annie gave a hand to each of the children, and they set off at a run straight for the old fir tree.

"We can stay here," cried Fred, "because that tiresome cross nurse is not with us. I am so glad she did not come out to-day."

"But she is coming, Fred." Annie pointed

to the gravel walk, where nurse was to be seen toiling after her charges, and muttered: "She's coming as fast as she can—waddling like the fat old gray duck in the yard."

Fred overheard her, and, highly delighted, gave a leap into the air, shouting, "Nurse comes waddling like the fat—"

But before he could finish the sentence, Annie, in a great fright lest nurse should hear, put her hand over his mouth. He struggled to get free, and began again, as distinctly as he could speak for laughing, "Nurse comes waddling like the fat old gray—"

He had just got so far, when Annie imprisoned him once more.

"Don't say it, Fred," implored she, "and you shall have my new box with the swan on the lid."

"Why must not I say it, Annie?—Nurse, Annie says you are like—;" and then the scuffle was renewed.

Nurse and Fred were always at war. Fred, although only four years old, could be very troublesome; and if nurse was angry out of doors, he knew he had nothing to do but to run off, for she was too stout to follow him fast. In the nursery it was, of course, a different thing; there nurse had it all her own way. Lucy was her favourite, because she was obedient and quiet like a little mouse; but she was two years older than Fred, so it was no wonder that she was wiser. While Annie and Fred were struggling, she was amusing herself quietly by walking round and round the tree looking for egg-shells. She raised the long silk grass with her foot to see if one might be hidden in a crevice between two tufts of moss, or under the withered fir needles.

As she was doing so, she perceived that there were two distinct noises above her head; —first, the sound made by the herons, to

which she was well accustomed; and then, lower down in the tree, an incessant noise, something between a chatter and a caw. She was looking up to discover where it came from, when a pair of gray crows flew out of the tree.

They returned presently with twigs to a nest they were building on the first branch from the bottom. The nest was almost finished; there was only the uppermost layer to be put on.

Lucy was much amused watching them, and wanted to stay; but nurse called her, and she had to run away after the others.

Mr. Heron had been flying about wildly for several minutes; he now alighted beside his wife. "I wish the children had stayed to play," said he, in a very anxious tone. "They might possibly have frightened those horrible gray crows away."

"I don't know why you dislike the crows

so much; surely this is a large tree—large enough for several families."

"You are very ignorant, my dear, if you think these are not dangerous neighbours," rejoined he. "When I was a young bird I saw the peace and happiness of the whole heronry destroyed by a single pair of gray crows. Ask our friends in the other fir trees, and they will tell you how we lost my youngest sister one unhappy day last spring when my parents were out fishing. She left the nest and never returned; and after a long search we found her mangled body lying on a broad fir branch under the crows' nest. I do not know how our nestlings are to be taught to fly if these crows stay here."

Mrs. Heron sighed heavily when she saw her mate so melancholy and anxious; and spread her wings out protectingly over her own long-legged little ones, and was glad to think they would not be attempting to fly for some days yet.

It was not long ere all the herons found that they had cruel enemies in the crows. Here and there and everywhere they flew, attacking the young birds, and even the old ones, as they were returning to their nests.

It was no unusual sight to see a heron making ineffectual efforts to gain its lofty nest, while one crow flew over it pecking its back and beating it down to the earth, and the other flew underneath, occasionally driving its sharp beak into its breast.

The crows had made their nest and were bringing out their ravenous brood; but the hen did not think it necessary to sit constantly upon the eggs. If her mate's hoarse cry warned her that he was in pursuit, she darted to his assistance in a moment, and together they vanquished the exhausted heron, and drove their beaks into its quivering flesh.

Not a day had passed since they settled in the fir tree without their supping on heron's

flesh. The two young herons upon the topmost bough were kept close prisoners to the nest. They stood on the edge every day stretching their pinions, and wondering when they would be permitted to fly.

They were strong, handsome birds. The elder was named Silverwing, because her plumage was so beautiful; and the younger one was called Slenderneck.

"The crows are gone out, mother," said Silverwing one day; "they are at the other end of the rookery. I wish you would let me take a flight—only one. I want to soar over those tall chimneys, and peep into the nursery window that you and father tell us about. Do let me."

"No, Silverwing, no! I'll tell your father if you are not patient and good."

At this moment a loud noise was heard, and they saw an old heron pursued by the gray crows. Nearer and nearer they

came, now driving the poor bird down to the ground, now rising with it and getting above it, to drive it down again. As the frightened bird and his pursuers came closer, Silverwing discovered him to be her father. He made one more strong effort to shake off the crows, and got to the nest at last, shaking and trembling all over.

"Children," said he, as soon as he was a little recovered, "I have lost your supper; it was a large, magnificent fluke, but Cruel Beak made me drop it, and here I am hungry and faint, but glad to escape with life. I fear you must go to sleep without any supper to-night; and if Jack does not shoot Cruel Beak to-morrow, we may all give ourselves up for lost."

Jack was Fred's eldest brother, a tall boy, who had a gun of his own, with which he shot a great many magpies every year. He was trying to get a shot at the gray crows, but

they were so wary that he had not been able to come near them.

"Father, when may I take a flight over those tall chimneys, and take a peep in at the nursery window?" asked Silverwing.

"Never!" replied the old heron, in a voice as hoarse as Cruel Beak's. "Never, you naughty Silverwing, so long as there is a crow in that nest down there;" and to enforce his words, he struck Silverwing a hard blow with his strong wing, which quieted her for that day. "Do you know," he proceeded, turning to his mate, "that our neighbours in the old fir tree at the avenue gate have lost another nestling?—they have only one bird left."

All this time Fred and Lucy sat on the window seat every morning, and looked out at their fir tree. It was a great grief to them to see what a sad life the gray crows led the herons; and when they went out to walk and found one dead heron after another lying half-

eaten under the trees, they used to return to the house, imploring their father and Jack to shoot the crows.

"That is easier said than done, Fred; I wish those plaguy crows were caught, I am sure, for they are destroying all our young herons just as they did last spring. Jack must invent some kind of trap to catch them," said papa.

"I am quite tired of creeping about after them all day long without ever getting a shot," Jack declared. "They must have eyes in the backs of their heads, they are so wary."

For some days Silverwing kept perfectly quiet, although she gazed as longingly as ever at the tall chimneys and the nursery window; but a day came when she would be restrained no more. Her parents were both gone fishing, and she stretched her wings to fly.

"Stay, please stay," entreated poor Slender-neck, trying to hold her wing with his beak;

but she broke loose from him, laughing at his warnings, and flew off towards the window where the children were seated. She thought it most delicious to float in the pure, buoyant air; never had she imagined that to fly could be such a charming thing. On and on she flew, over the tall chimneys, and away, away! She did not pause until she came in sight of the river, where several herons stood fishing.

In alarm lest one of them should be her father, she wheeled about in the air, and turned homewards. But she did not reach the fir tree in safety. No sooner had she got inside the avenue gate than a horrible hoarse caw was heard, and the gray crows, who had been lying in wait for prey, darted out upon her.

Up and down, hither and thither they flew; Silverwing sometimes almost hoped that she had shaken them off, but presently they were close to her again.

At last she gained her own tree, and she made many vain attempts to rise to the nest.

Fred and Lucy saw the whole scene; they saw her rise a short distance, only to be beaten down once more to the ground. This happened several times, and then she gave up trying to rise, and stood panting and trembling in the grass.

"Nurse!" shouted the children together, "those nasty, wicked crows are killing one of our young herons!"

They screamed louder still, and tapped upon the window pane, but the crows took no notice of them. Silverwing's strength gave way. A film came over her eyes at the moment when Cruel Beak swept down upon her and stabbed her to the heart. Before he had time to draw out his beak, all dripping with blood, Silverwing was dead.

Both the crows were speedily at work upon

her, and their hoarse young brood breakfasted on the warm flesh.

You may imagine the grief there was when poor Mr. and Mrs. Heron returned home, and learned the fearful story from Slenderneck, and how they mourned for disobedient Silverwing.

Cruel Beak did not live to do much more mischief. That very night Jack's trap was finished, and he set it up under the fir tree. It was baited with carrion, and Cruel Beak greedily ventured his wicked throat in order to snatch at the bait. He was found next morning caught by the neck, stiff and cold, to Fred's great joy.

In like manner perished his mate and nestlings, and the surviving herons had the satisfaction of seeing them nailed to the barn door in company with a hawk and some magpies.

As to Silverwing's bones, they were not left to bleach beneath the fir tree. Lucy and

Fred gathered them up carefully, put them in a box, and buried them in their little garden. It was a most respectable funeral. They placed a white stone to mark her grave. Slenderneck and a young heron from the next fir tree built a nest the following spring, and lived to rear a promising family, to whom they frequently related as a warning the sorrowful history of Silverwing.

III.

BUNNY'S ADVENTURES.

Jack and his papa were going out to ferret one day. Fred, peeping from the nursery window, saw them go to the barn where the ferrets were kept, and knew they would come to the kitchen presently, and, placing the ferrets on the great table at the fire, would proceed to sew up their mouths with a fine needle and some green silk. He had overheard Jack ask Annie to lend him some silk; to which request she replied that she had only green silk, but that he was welcome to it.

From all this, little cunning Fred gathered that the ferrets were about to be muzzled; and as the operation was one he liked to see, he

watched until nurse turned her back, in the act of laying baby in her cradle, and, creeping to the door on his tip-toes, he stole cautiously downstairs to the kitchen.

Papa and Jack did not give him a very cordial reception; but he was satisfied to find they did not send him away.

"Does that hurt the ferrets?" he inquired.

Fred had a tiresome habit. He went on asking the same question, if you did not answer him immediately, in a sing-song manner that drove his friends and relations nearly crazy. He did so in the present instance, and provoked Jack to push him roughly from the table, and his papa to call him "a tiresome child, and a chattering magpie."

"Do take me with you to shoot, papa; oh, do! May I go?"

"I'd like to know what nurse would say if I did," cried his papa laughing.

Fred drew papa's head down so that he

might whisper confidentially in his ear, "She doesn't know where I am now. Let us just creep away without telling her."

"No, no, my boy. You must wait till you are older, and then you shall go shooting with me."

Poor Fred's small face grew quite long, as his hopes fell, and he watched his papa and Jack walk off with their guns—the latter carrying the bag containing the ferrets; and Snap, the terrier, trotting at their heels. Indeed, as he slowly climbed the nursery stairs, he could not help crying a little.

He forgot his troubles, however, long before the ferreting was over, and was very happily building castles with Lucy's bricks, when a heavy step was heard mounting the stairs, and his papa opened the door.

"Well, Fred," said he, "I've brought you a live rabbit, to console you for not coming with me to-day."

Fred jumped up in a great hurry, and gave a shout of joy, for papa had a pretty young rabbit in his hand.

"How nice, papa! How did you catch it?"

"Snap caught it; the ferrets chased it out of the hole, and he caught it. I thought it a pity he should eat up such a little young thing, so I made him drop it; and finding it unhurt I carried it home to you. You see it is a baby rabbit—not nearly so old as Miss Grace there. Will you and Lucy be a father and mother to it?"

"That we will! May it live here?"

"Well, that needs consideration. — What does nurse say to it?"

"I can't keep my nursery clean, sir, if rabbits are kept in it. I must tell upon Master Fred, sir; I said I would. He is a vexatious boy; and he left his clothes and face in a nice mess this morning with earth and

gravel, that he carried up here in his pinafore. I said I'd tell you, sir."

"O Fred, why are you so troublesome? I suppose Bunny must be kept in a box in the servants' hall."

An empty box was found, and the young rabbit was housed in it. His bed consisted of a wisp of hay; there were tiny holes pierced in the lid of the box that he might breathe easily. He was sadly frightened at first when they put him in, and lay panting. Indeed, Fred thought he was going to die, his sides were heaving so much; but half-an-hour later, when the children took a peep at him, he was eating his saucerful of bread and milk quite tranquilly.

Many a journey downstairs did Fred and Lucy make to visit him, much to nurse's distraction; for they dirtied their clean white stockings by kneeling on the flags before his box.

As he grew older they did not keep him always shut up. They carried him out of doors, and let him graze at the foot of the fir tree. He was well watched then by the bright eyes of both children, but he showed no inclination to run away.

"I wonder if he is quite happy," said Lucy, when they had had him for about a month. "Do you think he has forgotten his father and mother?"

"I don't know, Lucy;" and Fred went on munching his cake, letting a crumb fall among the long silk grass every few minutes for Bunny to pick up.

"Because," proceeded thoughtful Lucy, "it must be a sad thing to leave one's father and mother. I'd not like to leave mamma."

"But I'd like to leave nurse, Lucy; that I should!"

"Hush, Fred! Papa says you are not a good boy to nurse."

"It would be fine fun to run away from her, and hide. I'll do it some day. I'll go off, and live by myself in the woods!"

"We'll know where to look for you, you foolish boy!"

Bunny lived on the fat of the land, and grew a large, fat rabbit. The whole family liked him. Even nurse became quite friendly towards, him and made no objection when Lucy smuggled him into the nursery during breakfast time. She went so far as to laugh when he thrust his nose into her sugar-bowl; and every morning after that she strewed a little sugar on the table-cloth for him.

He was a very welcome guest downstairs also, at papa and mamma's breakfast table. He was allowed to walk round it, stopping as long as he liked at each person's plate to pick up crumbs of bread and sugar, or drink tea out of a spoon.

Lucy and Fred had their breakfast in the

nursery, but they liked to go to the parlour to get tastes of ham and little slices of bread and marmalade.

Fred used to say to Lucy, when he happened to be in a confidential mood, "I wish I were as old as Jack, for then I should go out shooting with papa; and nurse would not be strong enough to put me in my bath."

"But you'd like your bath if you were a big boy, Fred. You know Jack takes a cold bath every morning.—I'd like to be as old as Annie, that I might breakfast with papa and mamma, and have as much marmalade as I wish, and sit up till nine every evening."

Months went by, and Bunny was no longer a baby rabbit. It was a fine autumn evening: the setting sun sent bright rays through the fir-wood that fell here and there on the red, flaky stems, turning them sometimes orange, sometimes crimson—rays that touched our

children's little flaxen heads also, making them shine like gold.

Bunny played beside them, but they did not heed him much; for they were building a splendid house with fir-cones, chestnuts, and beech-mast, to be surrounded by a wall of silk grass. There was a turnip field near the great fir tree, —a large blue-green turnip field, whence came aromatic, pungent scents, with every breath of wind.

All the rabbits from all the ditches in the neighbourhood loved to frequent it: they called it their garden, and honestly believed that every turnip in it had been sown for them! Thither came Bunny's father, mother, brothers, and sisters, every evening, but on this particular evening they happened to come much nearer the edge of the field than usual, and wandered on until they caught sight of Bunny playing about under the old fir tree.

They advanced to within speaking distance,

and then he perceived them and went to meet them.

The old rabbits walked round and round smelling him; at length his mother lifted up her fore paw and very gently stroked his face. Her feelings were almost too much for speech, but she managed to say to her husband, "This is Bunny, our own child, who was stolen from us when he was young."

"How do you know?"

"Oh! very well indeed. See this little fold in his left ear; he was born with it."

The father then hugged him affectionately, and the brothers and sisters begged him to go home with them. He asked what their hole was like, and they described it as a delightful nest — warm and soft, with a large larder wherein slices of turnip, ears of corn, and bundles of juicy grass were stored.

He had to relate in his turn what kind of life he had been leading while under the children's

protection; and a long history he gave of his box in the servants' hall, his fare of bread and milk, his tit-bits at nurse's breakfast, and his pleasant games with Lucy and Fred. He wound up by saying he could not think of leaving these delights.

So he went quietly back to the foot of the fir tree, and rejoined the children, who did not know that he had been away from them.

His relations went home through the turnip field, talking very fast about Bunny as they went.

Next evening Lucy and Fred again played in the wood, and Bunny went further than before, to meet his friends; and when they invited him to go home to the hole with them, he did not say "No." "I'll go to visit you, and see for myself what the hole is like; but you must let me return here to-morrow night." Thus saying, Bunny went off with his mother.

It was growing rather dusk when nurse came out to call Lucy and Fred to bed.

"Bun! Bun! Bun!" shouted they, and they peered all round them in the grass; but no Bunny was to be seen.

"O Fred, can Snap have frightened him? But I did not hear any barking," said Lucy.

"Come, Miss Lucy, into the house at once!" commanded nurse.—"Come, sir!"

"No, no, nurse. I won't go till we find Bunny. Let me alone, I say!" But poor Fred's crying and kicking were all of no use; nurse inexorably carried him upstairs to bed. The melancholy noise he made brought his papa out of the dining-room to see what caused such disturbance; and to pacify both children, he promised that he and Jack would take a lantern and search the wood very carefully for Bunny.

Nurse allowed them to look out of the window before they went to bed, and they saw

them still searching; but lost Bunny was never found! His empty box was hidden in the lumber-room out of the children's sight; but many, many days went by before they, in a measure, forgot Bunny.

IV.

BUNNY'S VISIT.

A WHOLE year had gone by since Bunny's departure. Fred was fully five years old. He had outgrown the crimson pelisse, which was put by till baby should be large enough to wear it; and he now wore a handsome suit of black velvet knickerbockers with gilt buttons. He was noisy and headstrong still, and often fought with nurse.

Lucy was good and quiet as ever, and useful in the nursery. She was growing tall; but she feared it would be a long time yet before she was likely to be considered old enough to eat as much marmalade as she wished.

The parlour window was wide open, for it

was a lovely summer morning, and pleasant breezes sighed through the fir wood, and came into the room where papa, mamma, Jack, and Annie sat at breakfast; while Lucy and Fred, each on a stool, were seated at a little distance from the table, waiting humbly until mamma thought of offering them something. No wonder they wished to be grown up like Jack and Annie.

As they sat in expectation, their sharp young ears caught a curious sound, like the trampling of many tiny feet upon the gravel; and going to the window together, they saw a sight that surprised them extremely. A large old rabbit was coming towards the window, followed by three small ones! He stepped very slowly, looking over his shoulder every minute, as if he were encouraging the young rabbits. It was such a curious sight that Lucy and Fred's blue eyes opened wider and wider as they looked at it, and they

squeezed one another's hands very tightly indeed.

The old rabbit walked straight to the window, jumped upon the sill, and rubbed himself in the most caressing manner against the children, as though quite overcome with joy. He then turned to beckon the three little ones to follow him; but they needed much coaxing and reassuring before they could be induced to enter the room.

While he was rubbing himself against the children, they examined him more closely. "It's Bunny grown a large rabbit!" cried they. "Papa! mamma! here is our own Bunny come home to us; and he has his children with him! There is the fold in his left ear."

The joyful uproar was so loud that the little rabbits took fright, and scampered off among the shrubs. Not so Bunny. He was quite contented and happy. Lucy carried him in her arms from the window to the table just as

she used to do, and he went round to be stroked and petted by the entire party. He remembered his way to the sugar-bowl quite well.

Just as he was swallowing a large crumb of good cake, he seemed to bethink of his young ones, for he jumped down hastily and ran to the window, where he stood calling to them.

"Do not be so foolish," said he. "These are my kind old friends. They have received me as kindly as if I had never left them. Lucy has got sugar to give you, and Fred will let you drink tea out of his spoon. I'll tell your mother, if you are so shy!"

But the young rabbits made various timid pauses before they reached the table. They plucked up courage at last, however, and the strange sight of four rabbits at breakfast with papa and mamma was seen by the children's wondering eyes!

Bunny looked so proud and happy, and

rubbed his fur against Fred and Lucy more than ever when they noticed his little ones.

It was very pretty to see him lift one of his fore paws and gently push the young rabbits forward if they were offered anything nice.

The party remained about a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time Bunny gave Fred's hand a last affectionate rub, and jumped on the window-sill, calling his family to follow; and all disappeared presently in the shrubbery. The children rushed to the window and stared after them.

"Well," exclaimed papa and mamma, drawing a deep breath, "we have lived to see very curious things. Are you quite sure that rabbit was Bunny, and not some fairy in Bunny's shape?"

"Of course it was Bunny," cried Fred indignantly. "We know the fold in his ear. It was Bunny, certainly, and his children.—

Lucy, do you think he will bring his wife the next time?"

"Perhaps he is a widower," put in papa.

"I hope they will come back to us, Fred. Oh, how I wish we knew where they live!" and Lucy's excited feelings found vent in a long, deep sigh.

The next morning, and many mornings afterwards, Bunny visited his friends at breakfast time; and ere long his timid little ones were perfectly at home—so tame that they ran up papa's coat-sleeve, and hid in the folds of Annie's dress!

"You will give them a taste for foreign luxuries, and make them dislike turnips and corn, Lucy," said papa, when he saw how fond of sugar the little rabbits were becoming.

"Remember, papa, you are never to shoot them."

"But how am I to know your rabbits from the others when I am out ferreting, my dears?"

"You must give up going to ferret, then, papa."

"What! am I to allow the rabbits to eat up all my turnips, and destroy my young corn?"

"Yes, yes. You can afford to lose a few turnips. You know you are a rich man, papa."

"Not so rich as you think, you little monkey. I have my children to provide for."

"So has Bunny. He is only providing for his children when he takes your turnips;" and thoughtful Lucy pressed up closer to her father, and caressed him while she pleaded for Bunny's family. Papa said he could not promise not to ferret any more; but at present the trout and salmon fishing occupied all his and Jack's spare time, and their guns were laid by.

V.

NURSE'S FALL.

Nurse was sitting very comfortably at her breakfast one morning, with her brown tea-pot full of strong tea, a small cream-jug, and a plate of hot buttered toast before her. Her comfort would have been complete if the children had not been in the nursery; but the bell had not yet rung to summon them to the parlour, and Fred was careering round the room chasing baby, whose life and limb he was imperilling every moment; and both were shouting at the pitch of their voices.

Lucy was trying to restore order, but her attempts were not very successful; so poor

nurse could not thoroughly enjoy the good things on her table.

It was no wonder that, having bade Fred keep quiet several times in vain, she at last got so angry as to start up and give him a slap. Quiet was restored for a short time, but Fred indignantly brooded over this insult, and watched for an opportunity to revenge himself. Should he make a raid on the sugar-bowl, or on the buttered toast? Revolving this dark question in his little mind, he stood sullenly in the background. Just then unsuspecting nurse tilted up her chair as she stretched over the table to reach a knife, which was rather too close to where baby was standing, and Fred seized his opportunity. He caught hold of the chair and pulled it quickly away, upsetting nurse, who caught at the tea-pot in falling.

Her fall was no light one. She gave a cry as she reached the ground; and baby, much terrified, screamed loudly in concert. Bruised

by the fall, and scalded by the tea, she lay helpless; but Lucy ran to her assistance.

Guilty Fred, filled with remorse and dread of the consequences to himself, darted from the nursery, downstairs, and out of the back door, which stood open. Neither hat nor great-coat had he; but he could not stay to think of such things—he ran for his life. It was not long before he gained the shelter of the plantation behind the house; and when within cover of the thick trees he paused to draw breath.

He was in the wildest part of the wood, where great pieces of rock appeared every here and there among the trees, forming magnificent lurking-places, with their crowns of tall ferns and mossy cushions. It was altogether wild, and beautiful enough to be Fairyland. Fred's distress of mind wore off in a very short time; so, believing himself quite safe, he began to play. He had got his good breakfast before poor nurse sat down to hers, and was not in

the least hungry; so he played very contentedly for a long time, climbing the hazels, and filling his pockets with nuts, and eating ripe blackberries.

It seemed a long time to him before he heard voices and steps approaching. He crept far, far in among the rocks and brushwood, and lay quietly in his hiding-place. The voices were those of his papa, mamma, and Lucy.

"Fred, Fred!" called they very loudly, one after the other. "Come to us, Fred. No one is angry with you."

It was his mamma who called out, "No one is angry," and her kind voice shook as if she had been crying; but mischievous Fred took no notice—he chose to stay and play in the woods a little longer, and never thought how unhappy he was making his mamma.

"What made you think he was in the plantation, Lucy?" inquired papa.

"O papa, he used to say he would run away from nurse, and hide in the woods."

Fred played until he grew tired and hungry, and he began to think of the nice potatoes and mutton-chops at the nursery dinner; but he was afraid to go home yet. At length he wandered out of the plantation into a meadow, and lay down on the grass. Bunny and his family had just dined heartily upon turnip, and were in the meadow eating the tender grass by way of dessert. They spied Fred lying stretched out disconsolately, and went to look at him closer.

"Come, dear, let us fetch Fred the remains of our dinner," said he to his wife, who was shyly lingering in the background.

She agreed, and all the rabbits scampered down the field and disappeared in their hole. It was not long before they were to be seen toiling up the hill, each carrying a small scrap of turnip in his mouth. They laid them down

near Fred's hand, and to please Bunny he tried to eat a piece; but it was hard and bad, and he could not swallow more than one mouthful.

He was sleepy, and very cold, and soon his eyes shut. The other rabbits dispersed, but Bunny remained near him. He rubbed his cold hands with his soft fur, and finally jumped upon his chest, and lay down there, spreading himself out as large as he could in hopes of warming him.

Thus they were discovered by Jack soon afterwards. "Come along, Fred, you naughty boy!" cried he, pulling Fred up by the hand. "How durst you lead us the wretched life you have done this morning? Come along this moment."

He took Fred home, and straight into the dining-room, where mamma was seated by the fire, papa walking up and down the room, and Lucy hemming a handkerchief. They all

looked very sad; but when they turned round and saw Fred there was a cry of joy.

"O Fred, how unhappy you have made me!" cried mamma, folding him in her arms.

"He is quite damp," said papa; "he must go to nurse, and have his clothes changed, and get some food; and after all that we shall talk to him about his conduct to-day."

"Bunny was acting as a blanket," remarked Jack.

"Nonsense! I always said that rabbit must be a fairy."

"He and the others brought me bits of turnip too, papa."

"Did you see his wife?" asked Lucy eagerly; and Fred told the whole tale of his morning's adventures.

Mamma, observing that he did not like to go to the nursery, said, "You need not be afraid of nurse, Fred. Poor woman! she will be too glad that you are safe, to scold you."

So he and Lucy went upstairs. Lucy threw open the nursery door, calling out, "Here comes Fred!"

Nurse set down the baby, and, running to the door, caught Fred to her breast, crying over him, and calling him "her boy, her naughty boy."

Her leg had been scalded and her arm bruised when she fell, but she forgot all that now. She took off his damp clothes, bathed his feet and hands in hot water, and put on the old crimson pelisse; then she set him on his little stool next a glowing fire, and gave him a mug of boiled bread and milk, with plenty of cream and sugar in it—much, much nicer than Bunny's turnip!

He had only taken one mouthful when he laid down his spoon, and, looking up in nurse's face, said very seriously, "Nurse, I'll never be a bad boy to you any more."

VI.

THE MATCH-BOX.

No little reader will imagine that Fred lost his mischievous ways all at once, though he had looked up in nurse's face with his large eyes, and said so gravely, "Nurse, I'll never be a bad boy to you any more." But he tried very hard indeed to be wise and good like Lucy.

He failed, however, sometimes. I am going to tell you about one of his worst failures.

One day that Annie was sent a message to the kitchen press by her mother, Fred stole cautiously downstairs close behind her, and while she was filling the sugar-bowl, he adroitly possessed himself of a box of matches, stooping

low, and taking care not to rustle the paper it was lying on.

Full of delight at his success, he hid the prize in one of his pockets and made off with all speed, unperceived by Annie. He had long, long desired to have a match-box of his own. Every time he passed through the yard and saw the splendid dry shavings that the carpenter had left in the cart-shed, this wish of his increased; the shavings would make a fine fire, he knew, if he could only set them alight! He was always getting into trouble by playing with fire. Just a week before, he was discovered burning paper in the nursery, baby watching him very admiringly, while Sarah, who should have prevented it, was amusing herself with a novel.

Nurse returning at that moment was very angry, first with Sarah for neglecting her duty of watching the children, and then with Fred for his naughty ways; and she threatened to

complain of him to his papa if she ever knew of his meddling with fire again.

Since then he had been nurturing enchanting dreams of possessing a match-box of his own, and being in a position to set nurse at defiance.

The nursery match-box was so jealously guarded by both nurse and Sarah that he knew it would be vain for him to think of getting hold of it; besides, it stood on the tip-top shelf of the cupboard, which only a tall person could reach, and he was hardly ever left alone in the nursery long enough to admit of his placing a chair before the cupboard and standing upon it.

You will now understand why his little heart beat with exultation when he bore away the match-box from the kitchen press.

He remembered perfectly what nurse had said when he burned the paper. "You must tell me at once if you see Master Fred go near

the fire again, Sarah, and that very minute I go for his papa." He remembered the words distinctly, yet he did not suffer them to turn him from his wicked design.

Sarah was very fond of reading the yellow novel; therein lay Fred's hope of success in his deeply-laid plan.

He waited for his opportunity, keeping the match-box in his pocket by day and under his pillow by night, and nobody, not even Lucy, guessed his secret.

But his time came at last. Nurse was gone to the kitchen, Sarah was reading beside the fire, while Grace toddled about the room.

"I'll take care of baby for you, Sarah," said Fred patronizingly.

"Very well, sir; you may play with her if you don't lead her into mischief," replied Sarah, without raising her head.

Fred coaxed Grace over to the window, lifted her upon the seat, and began to empty

his pockets of shavings, which he piled up in a corner opposite her. It was surprising what a quantity of shavings he had managed to stow away about his small person.

His next step was to strike a match very cautiously, and, as fast as lightning, apply it to the pile on the window seat. There was a smoke and then a brilliant flame. Baby shouted with delight and kicked lustily at the shavings. Presently one of her little woollen socks began to singe, and the smell of burning attracting Sarah's attention, she flung down her book, rushed to the window, and saw the whole catastrophe.

"Oh, you naughty, mischievous boy! you've nearly burned the house down! See if you don't catch it this time."

"There's no harm done," said Fred; and he swept the blazing shavings on the floor, and stamped upon them till they were extinguished.

"Give up the match-box, you bad child!" screamed Sarah.

But Fred resolved to keep his treasure, and a great scuffle ensued, which was at its height when nurse came in. Sarah lost no time in telling the whole story. It would be hard to describe how angry nurse was; how papa was told in spite of Fred's pleading; how he was condemned to spend the rest of the long day in bed, without toys, or picture-books, or sweeties; how bitterly he repented of his misdeeds when the bell rang to summon Lucy downstairs to dessert; and how the good-natured little girl saved her fig and half her pear for him, and gave them to him while she was being undressed for bed.

Fred was very indignant with Sarah for telling nurse upon him; and a few days afterwards, finding her again alone in the nursery, he felt called upon to remonstrate with her seriously upon her conduct.

"I would not be you for the world, Sarah."

"Why, sir?"

"Because no one in the house likes you since you did that mean thing—telling nurse the day I burned the shavings. Indeed you are making yourself disliked. Annie doesn't like you, and Lucy doesn't like you."

"O sir, I'm very sorry to hear it!"

"Neither does Annie the housemaid, nor Edward, nor cook. You know, when a servant makes herself disliked, she is just like a canary pecked at by the other birds. I wouldn't be you for the world—so mean!"

"Never mind, Master Fred," rejoined Sarah, trying hard not to laugh; "you and I'll be good friends yet."

"No, Sarah, I cannot love you any more."

After this all things went on very quietly for a long time—so quietly that papa, mamma, and nurse declared Fred must be becoming a wise boy.

His uncle sent a large bag of chestnuts from Dublin for mamma's dessert, and of course the children came in for a share of them. They greatly enjoyed seeing them roasted on the top bar of the dining-room grate, as well as eating them when roasted. Papa said. "We ought to send nurse some chestnuts. Who will take them to her?"

"I will, papa," from Lucy.

"Let me! let me!" from Fred.

"Well, as Fred and nurse are such good friends at present, he shall carry up her chestnuts. See, here are twelve on the plate."

Fred set off to climb the long flights of stairs to the nursery. He had hardly reached the first landing before it struck him that twelve chestnuts were too many for nurse. He and Lucy were given but six each. He walked more and more slowly, and at last he stood still, took one chestnut, broke off its shell, and ate it.

"Nurse," cried he, bursting into the nursery with a very important air, "here are eleven chestnuts for you. Aren't eleven a great many for you?"

"Yes, indeed, sir—a great many. I am much obliged to your mamma and you."

Night came. The children were in bed, and mamma came to bid them good-night.

"Thank you for the chestnuts, ma'am," said nurse. "Master Fred brought me such a plateful—eleven of them."

"Eleven, nurse? Why, the master counted them, and there were twelve."

"Indeed, ma'am! I should never have thought of counting them; but Master Fred came in saying, 'Here are eleven chestnuts, nurse; aren't these a great many for you?'"

"O Fred, Fred," cried mamma, "did you take one?" She spoke in a grave tone, although she could scarcely keep from smiling a little.

Poor little Fred from beneath a mountain of bed-clothes sobbed forth a trembling "Yes."

"Fred, Fred, I am so angry and disappointed: you are not my generous, honest boy any more."

"Please, ma'am, forgive him this once, and don't mention it to his papa. I'm sure Miss Lucy won't say a word about it. I'm very sorry I happened to mention the word *eleven*."

"I am glad you did, nurse." There was an awful pause. Nothing was heard except Fred's heart-broken sobbing. Mamma was thinking. "Well, nurse, I forgive him, and shall not speak of the matter, since you ask me," said she.

But she went away without kissing Fred. Next morning nurse found the bits of blackened shell lying on the landing: she gathered them up every one, for fear they should tell the tale of Fred's delinquency.

Fred kept all his chestnuts that evening; and to papa's question, "Why don't you eat

them, Fred?" he made no answer. Mamma and Lucy guessed why he was keeping them. He went straight to nurse and poured them into her lap. "Here," said he, "are my six chestnuts for you, nurse, instead of that one I ate."

Nurse was going to refuse them, but she thought better of it. The lesson he had learned was useful. From that time forth he could be trusted to carry nurse uncounted supplies of the very nicest things, and he gained such a character for rectitude that no one ever dreamed of suspecting him.

His nursery history is almost finished. Not very long after the affair of the chestnuts, he and Lucy were promoted to the school-room, where they were very happy, and got on well with Miss M'Kaye.

Lucy was quiet as she used to be in her nursery days; Fred was still quicksilvery in his movements, but he learned so fast that he

was a favourite with his governess. She used to turn to Fred with a smile when the others had finished their lessons, and say, "Now for my bright, clever little boy."

Yes! nurse's troublesome charge had expanded into an industrious boy, who wrote beautiful copies, read first-rate lessons, and whose clever little sums were often kept to be shown to papa.

TIME ABOUT FAIR PLAY;

OR,

WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?

"I WANT to be captain!" said Andy.

"But you were captain last time," objected Joe. "It isn't fair that you should be *it* every time. It is Harry's turn now; and then it will be mine."

"Ho!" said Andy scornfully; "you would make a great captain, to be sure! You are not big enough to be captain to a company of mice. You are the boy that his mother keeps shut up in the sugar-bowl when she doesn't want him."

"For shame, Andy!" said Willie, Joe's brother. "Joe can't help his size. I think

you are mean to throw it in his face so often as you do."

"His mother doesn't keep him in the sugar-bowl, that is plain to be seen," said Joe, who was not wanting in wit, if he was in size. "He'd be sweeter-tempered if she did."

"I don't care," returned Andy, growing very red in the face; "if I can't be captain, I won't play—so! And I won't let you take my drum either."

The boys looked at each other in some dismay, for Andy's was the only drum in the company; and what is a company without a drum?

"Oh, come, Andy; don't be so selfish," said David Williams. "You were captain yesterday and the day before, and Harry has got his nice cap and sword all on purpose. What's the use of spoiling every one's fun?"

"Oh, very well," replied Andy; "if I spoil every one's fun, I can just go away—that's all. Give me that drum, Charley Brown."

Harry Adams, the boy whose turn it was to be captain, had been standing by all this

time without saying a word. He did want very much to command the little company, and he had persuaded his elder sister to make him an elegant cap for the purpose. It was of dark-blue paper, with yellow stars, and a real feather in it; and, moreover, he had a famous tin sword, with a sheath and sword-belt just like a real sword, which his father bought for him. After all these preparations Harry naturally felt it rather hard to give up the honour which was his due. But Harry had one quality which would in time fit him for commands much more important than the one in dispute. Though he was a little boy, he had learned to rule his own spirit, and to deny himself for the good and pleasure of others. So, when he saw that the game was likely to be spoiled, he gave up his own claims at once.

"Oh, never mind," said he; "I don't care. Andy can be captain to-day, if he wants to be. I would just as soon be a private as anything else; for the privates win the battles, after all, as father says."

"But what's the use?" objected Joe. "He'll only want to be captain just as much to-morrow."

"To-morrow is Sunday; and we don't play soldiers on Sunday," said Harry, laughing. "Come, Andy, you shall be captain; and you may take my sword, too, if you want it. Don't let us waste all our play-time in disputing."

"Well, if you were not a good boy, I wouldn't say so," said David. "I fancy your mother keeps *you* in the sweetmeat-closet, instead of the sugar-bowl."

"She wouldn't have many sweetmeats left if she did," said Harry, laughing. "Raspberry jam can't stand before me. Come, hurrah, Andy! Take your sword, and get your men in order."

Andy accepted the sword and the command together; and the boys went on with their game, marching round and round to the sound of the drum, shouldering their wooden guns, and behaving as much like soldiers as they possibly could.

Andy had got his own way, but he was not happy. He felt in his heart that he had been mean and tyrannical; and he knew that the other boys were of the same opinion, from the looks they cast at him and at each other. He was vexed with every one—with the boys, with Harry, and with himself. He was cross and fretful, found fault with everything, and finally declared that he would not play anyhow—he would not command such a set of stupid greenhorns, who could not tell their right hands from their left.

"Very well," said David. "If you want to resign, I'm sure every one is willing. Give Harry his sword; and take yourself off, if you can't play peaceably."

"I'm going," returned Andy. "I won't stay here another minute. Just give me my drum, Charley Brown."

"Give it to him, Charley," said David, as Charley hesitated. "I'm sure I'd rather do without his drum, if we must have him along with it."

Charley began to untie the drum from his

waist; but he was not quite quick enough for Andy's impatient humour. He snatched at the drum. Charley stepped backward, and, missing his footing, went head-over-heels into the deep water of the river on the banks of which they were standing, taking the drum with him!

All the boys screamed. Andy stood as if thunder-struck, while David and Harry began pulling off their jackets, intending to go in after Charley. But in one minute Charley was on the surface of the water, swimming like a frog, and in another he was out on the bank, quite wet, but otherwise none the worse for his ducking. But the drum! Cracked and drenched, with a great hole in the head, it would never play another march!

"There's your drum," said Charley, pulling it off and handing it to its owner. "Much good may it do you! If I were you I wouldn't be in quite such a hurry another time.—Whew! I say, boys, that water's cold."

"Come right into our house," said Harry. "You mustn't wait to go home. You might catch your death of cold going so far in your wet clothes. Come right to our house: that's the nearest place. You can put on some of my clothes; and yours will be dry by the time school is out."

All the boys went with Charley to Mrs. Adams's gate, and waited for him to come out, talking among themselves, meantime, about the events of the morning. Some of them thought that Andy had pushed Charley into the water on purpose.

"It would serve him right to put him into the same place," said one. "Just think! If Charley had not been such a good swimmer he might have been drowned. The water there is six feet deep."

"I don't believe Andy did it on purpose," said Joe. "There is no use in making him out worse than he is."

"No; because he is bad enough already," replied the other. "I know one thing, at any rate. I am not going to play soldiers

any more, if Andy is to be captain all the time. He just spoils all the fun, ordering every one about; and if he cannot have everything his own way, then he won't play. It isn't fair."

"I think the best way will be not to play with him at all," said Joe. "Let's just tell him next time that we can't have any pleasure where he is, and unless he can behave better we won't have anything to do with him. That will bring him to his senses, if anything will."

"Then he will run and tell Miss Gilbert," said one of the little boys.

"Let him run, and see what he will get by it," replied Joe. "If he thinks Miss Gilbert will take his part, he is much mistaken."

The boys carried out their determination. The next day, at the play-hour, Andy found himself left out of everything that was going on. No one wanted to play ball with him; no one would be either his horse or his driver; and when the soldiers were mustered

at noon, as usual, he found his place was filled by little Tommy Foster in petticoats: Tommy Foster, who had always played with the little girls, and could hardly talk plain, was preferred before him!

At first Andy tossed his head, and said, "I don't care." If they did not want him, he was sure he did not want them. But as the days went on, and he still found himself alone, he grew very tired of it.

"Well, Andy," said Miss Gilbert, one Friday afternoon, as she overtook him going home from school, "are you going with the boys on their picnic party to-morrow?"

Andy looked surprised. This was the first he had heard about the picnic. He had noticed a good deal of whispering and planning among the boys, but no one had said a word to him of the matter.

"I haven't heard anything about it," said he. "Are they going to have a picnic?"

"Yes. David Brown's father is going to take them all in his large cart down to the island, to catch fish and cook them in the

open air. They are going to have a grand drill too; and Captain Wood, David's uncle, who has just come home from the war, is going to review them. I supposed you were going, of course. How does it happen that you are left out?"

"The boys won't play with me any more!" said Andy, with a trembling lip. "They won't have anything to do with me; and they have taken little Tommy Foster into the company, instead of me."

"That is a sad state of things certainly," said Miss Gilbert. "How does it come about?"

"I don't know," replied Andy, hanging his head.

"Are you sure you don't know, Andy?" asked Miss Gilbert. Andy did not reply. "Then I must ask some one else," continued Miss Gilbert; and at that moment they came up with David Williams and two or three other boys. She called them to her, and inquired of David why they had not invited Andy to the picnic, adding, "You know I never interfere with your amusements, boys;

but I do not like to have any quarrels among you."

"Well, the fact is, Miss Gilbert," said David, "we *can't* play with Andy. Unless he has everything exactly in his own way, he quarrels or sulks, and says he won't play at all. We turned him out of the company because he wanted to be captain all the time, instead of taking turns, as we agreed. I should like to ask him to the fishing-party; but I know just how it would be if I did. He would want to have the ordering of everything; and it would only spoil the pleasure of all the other boys."

"Is this true, Andy?" asked Miss Gilbert gravely. Andy did not answer. He knew it was all true, but he did not like to confess it. "If so, I do not wonder that the boys do not want you at their party. One such person as David describes is enough to spoil all their comfort."

"I am willing to have Andy, for my part," said David, who was a very kind-hearted boy, and who really felt sorry for Andy's mortifica-

tion. "If he will only promise to behave, and not bother the other boys, I will call for him the first one."

"Settle it between you," said Miss Gilbert, as she walked on. "I know what Andy will say, if he is wise."

"Come on, Andy; what *do* you say?" asked David, after they had walked on a little. "Will you go?"

Andy wanted to go very much; but his pride was not yet quite subdued, and he answered, "I don't want to go, if the boys don't want me."

"You know well enough why they don't want you," returned David. "Come, Andy, don't be a fool. I should think you have had enough of it by this time."

"Well, I won't!" said Andy; but it came very hard. "I'm sorry I acted so badly that day; but, really and truly, Dave, I didn't push Charley into the river."

"Nobody thought you did," replied David; "but then, you see, you might have told him so. You never even said you were sorry."

"I know it. I am sorry, though; and if the boys will let me play with them, I will try to do better."

"That's the way to talk!" said David. "I believe in owning it at once when one has done anything wrong. Well, Andy, I'll call for you to-morrow about nine."

"But I haven't got anything to take—any cake, or anything," objected Andy.

"Oh, never mind that. Mother has made up ever so many things. Only be sure to be ready; and take your fishing-rod."

Andy felt very shy about meeting the boys the next morning; but he found them all ready to welcome him and make things pleasant for him. David had talked the matter over with them, and they had agreed to let bygones be bygones. They had a grand time at the island, and caught ever so many fish; and all the boys noticed how ready Andy was to lend his rod and line to the boys who had none—how he showed Tommy Foster how to fix his bait, and took off his fish for him when that valiant soldier was afraid to touch them. He joined

in all that was going on, and never once said, "I won't play," all day long.

"Well, Andy, have you had a pleasant day?" asked David, as they were going home.

"Yes," replied Andy warmly. "I never had such a pleasant day all my life!"

"That's because you tried to make it pleasant for other folks," said David. "You see, Andy, each can't have everything his own way. Somebody has got to give up; and it may just as well be you or me as any one else. 'Turn about is fair play.' Besides, you don't get your own way any more by sticking up for it all the time: you only make people hate to have anything to do with you. Just look at Harry Adams. Every one likes him, and wants to please him, only because he is always ready to please everybody else. Miss Gilbert thinks he is a real Christian. She told me so."

"I don't think Harry is a Christian," said Andy. "He is a real nice boy, I know; but he is just as full of fun and frolic as he can be. I never saw such a boy at play!"

"Well, and why shouldn't he be?" asked David. "Is there any reason why a Christian boy shouldn't be full of fun and play?—at proper times, I mean. You never saw Harry playing in school, or making fun in church or in Sunday school, like some of the boys. Father is a Christian, if ever there was one; and just see how he plays with us children. We always have the best kind of time when father is along."

"Well, I always thought Christians must be very steady and sober and solemn, and never laugh nor have any fun at all," said Andy. "I should like to have *my* father such a kind of Christian as your father is."

David did not answer. He knew that Andy had not a very happy home; but he did not think it best to lead him to talk much about it. Presently he said,—

"Well, Andy, now that you have found out that you can be quite as happy without being captain always, and driving every one round as you used to, suppose you try it again, and see if you can't make the boys

like to play with you, instead of running away from you and leaving you out, as they have done lately. Don't you think it will be better?"

"I am sure it will," said Andy, "and I mean to try."

Andy was as good as his word; and he soon found the benefit of such a course. He was soon restored to his place in the company, when the boys found that he was willing to be obliging and take his turn with the rest. Finding him ready to give up to others, they, in turn, were ready to defer to him: so that he found he really got his own way oftener than when he was always contending for it; and before the end of the summer he was as great a favourite as Harry himself.

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